

The following information is provided to help you prepare for DINFOS. Questions/concerns that are not addressed below should be sent to [dinfosregistrar@dinfos.osd.mil](mailto:dinfosregistrar@dinfos.osd.mil)

### **HOW TO GET TO FORT MEADE**

**Flying:** If you arrive by commercial air, recommend you fly into Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Airport. It is about 10 miles north of the post on the south side of Baltimore. Military transportation is not available. Taxi service can be expensive, costing around \$45 one-way. However, the Airport Shuttle is available from BWI and provides ground transportation to Fort Meade for around \$25. For reservations and information, visit <http://www.theairportshuttle.com/> or call (800) 776-0323. In Maryland, call (410) 381-2772. You'll want to be taken to the billeting office, Abrams Hall, Bldg. 2793, located on Hawkins Drive off of Mapes Road (but you must come through the post Main Gate on Reece Road).

**Driving:** Fort Meade is northeast of Washington, D.C. and southwest of Baltimore off the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (Route 295). From the B/W Parkway, take the MD-175 exit toward Odenton. After turning onto MD-175, the fort is approximately two miles down the road. Look for the Reece Road entrance to the fort on your right.

**Registering a rental car or POV:** Visit the Ft. Meade webpage at: <http://www.ftmeade.army.mil>

**WARNING:** Obey all posted speed limits on Post. The Military Police strictly enforce all traffic regulations. Speeding fines begin at \$70 and go up from there so please drive carefully on (and off) Post.

### **REPORTING IN / BILLETING**

The billeting desk is located in Bldg. 2793, Abrams Hall. Please call (410) 674-7700 to confirm your billeting with a government credit card NLT 10 days prior to arrival. If you encounter problems with your reservation, please contact the DINFOS registrar via the email address above. Family members are not authorized to stay in billeting, nor are pets allowed.

**NOTE:** Room payments at billeting must be made every 30 days. The room cost is about \$1,680 for each 30 days. Make sure your credit card limit will cover you. Army interns should have had their credit card limits increased per the Deputy, Senior Civilian Advisor's recommendation. The DSCA recommends that you file a partial for each 30-day period to avoid credit card problems. FAX your voucher with the lodging receipt to DFAS, 317-510-6213 or 4143. Interns should fax partial vouchers to Mr. Stack, 703-697-2792.

**Late Arrivals:** Students arriving late risk losing their course reservation to a person on the class “stand-by” list. If you plan to arrive late for any reason, contact us at [dinfosregistrar@dinfos.osd.mil](mailto:dinfosregistrar@dinfos.osd.mil) . You may call (301) 677-4245 or (301) 677-4291.

### **CLASS INFORMATION**

On the first day of class, bring several copies of your orders and report to the room number posted on the monitor in the DINFOS lobby by 7:55 a.m. The first day includes briefings by the commandant and course coordinator, individual service in-processing, and small-group introductions.

Student parking is in the lot across from the school adjacent to the Shoppette. Once parked, cross the street (Zimborski Avenue). You’ll use the doors closest to the bus stop.

**Absence policy:** In every class several students report here with existing social/personal commitments that conflict with the class schedule. You need to determine your priorities before you arrive! Absences for non-emergency, personal reasons are not normally approved; request will be required from your supervisor. Your home station timekeeper will continue to maintain your time cards. **Clear your schedule now.**

Graduation is slated for the last day and is a mandatory formation. **If you’re flying out, do not schedule your flight before 5 p.m. on that date.**

### **DRESS**

Civilians should bring clothing equivalent to that worn by the military officers of their service (e.g.: what you wear to work).

### **ON-POST PRIVILEGES**

DINFOS has arranged PX/Dining facility privileges for DINFOS civilian students; a copy of your orders will be stamped during in-processing.

### **MAIL INFORMATION**

**The address is provided as a STOPGAP measure.** When you process in the first day of class, you will be told specifically how to get mail while you’re here. **DO NOT SEND MAIL OR PACKAGES TO THE SCHOOL.** Doing so will only delay you receiving that mail.

Army students (military and civilian)

Name

Bldg. 8609, 6<sup>th</sup> Arm Cav Rd.

USASSD

Fort G. Meade, MD 20755-5155

The DINFOS webpage provides a direct link to the Army detachment.

### **HEALTH CARE**

Most health benefits plans are accepted in this area. Fort Meade's Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center is not a full-service hospital; it may not be able to provide the health care you require. However, Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., the Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, MD and Malcolm Grow USAF Medical Center at Andrews Air Force Base are within driving distance. *If you are enrolled in TRICARE, you will be given an opportunity to temporarily disenroll from your region and enroll in the region that covers the Military District of Washington. DINFOS provides additional information during in-processing.*

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER QUALIFICATION COURSE (DINFOS-PAOQC)**

PAOQC students **are billeted on post**. If you expect to arrive early, contact the billeting office on post at (410) 674-7700. **You are expected to check-in at billeting NLT the day prior to class unless you plan to commute.**

As a note, this course is extremely demanding and many off-duty hours will be devoted to homework. As child care is scarce and expensive in this area, it would be better if children stayed with relatives while you are attending the course.

The Public Affairs Officer Qualification Course places a lot of emphasis on your writing and communication skills. An English diagnostic test will be given the first day. If you are currently "not up to speed" in basic grammar, writing and language skills, NOW is the time to review them. You will not have time to re-learn English basics during the course; poor grammar skills are a leading cause of failures from the course. You must also have basic keyboard skills, since all assignments must be printed. **If you know you cannot type, or that the keyboard requirement will be an undue burden, withdraw from the course!** You will not be able to get through the several typed, timed assignments.

You may want to become familiar with the "Associated Press Stylebook" before arriving here, especially the section on grammar and punctuation. The AP Stylebook is the standard for journalists and thus for public affairs writing classes at DINFOS. **However, please do not bring an AP Stylebook with you.** You will be issued an AP Stylebook to

use while you're here. Also, you will have an assignment for a speech and an editorial that will relate to your home unit. We suggest you bring information on your unit and your unit commander (electronically or on hard-copy) to help you prepare those assignments. You are also encouraged to purchase a copy of *Effective Public Relations, Eighth Edition* by Cutlip, Center and Broom, and *On Deadline, Third Edition*, by Howard and Mathews. These books will be issued to you to be used while you're here, but becoming familiar with them ahead of time will enhance your learning.

### **PERSONAL COMPUTERS / TAPE RECORDERS**

Bring a laptop if you can. At a minimum, the laptop should be loaded with Microsoft Word. Power Point, Front Page and PageMaker will come in handy but are **not required**. We highly recommend that if you are going to bring a laptop you get it in advance and become familiar with the computer and the word processing program supplied. Dial-up access is provided in billeting at no extra charge. DSL capability can be arranged through the billeting office, but students must pay for that service. If you cannot bring a laptop, students have access to classroom computers until 9 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, the school is closed weekends. The school does have laptops that can be checked out to students, but these laptops **are not configured for internet use**.

Some of the journalism work you will do during PAOQC involves interviewing people and drawing information and quotes to produce stories. A small tape recorder is helpful. If you own one, bring it. If you don't, seriously consider purchasing one, as you will also find it useful in your work in the field. Also, please bring several 3 ½-inch floppy disks, each capable of storing 1.4 megabytes, or a thumb drive.